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DEPARTMENT
OF
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DELAINE EASTIN

State Superintendent of Public Instruction

August 26, 2002

Dear Superintendent:

On behalf of the California Department of Education, I am pleased to offer our support for the President's Student Service Awards (PSSA). By encouraging California superintendents to identify and recognize youth who make an ongoing commitment to meaningful service, we are part of a collaborative effort with the American Institute for Public Service to help strengthen the PSSA program.

One of the goals of public education is to ensure that all students obtain the academic skills and knowledge necessary to become good citizens in our democracy. As Superintendent of Public Instruction and Chair of the Compact for Learning and Citizenship, I have encouraged educators to make service-learning a key strategy to promote the civic mission of education. The purpose of the civic mission of education is to instill in the next generation the values, knowledge, and skills of citizenship by engaging youth in meaningful service tied to academic content. When California's youth make a commitment to voluntary service in the community, there is a strong connection between service and learning opportunities. Meaningful, intentional service provides youth with opportunities to learn by preparing, leading, and reflecting upon the entire service experience. We firmly believe that each student will improve their academic learning and develop personal, social, and civic responsibility through structured service-learning projects that meet community needs.

Young people deserve our support and recognition for their volunteer efforts. The PSSA award is a tangible way to encourage youth to be vital resources for the creation of better communities and to demonstrate our conviction that one individual CAN make a difference. I will continue to urge educators, parents, students, and community members to embrace service-learning as a valuable educational strategy that can help our youth to become adept learners, capable workers, and active citizens.

Sincerely,

DELAINE EASTIN
State Superintendent of Public Instruction
(916) 319-0800

Visit the President's Student Service Awards &
Scholarships Web page at
<http://www.student-service-awards.org/>

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